

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 SANTIA 09212 212038Z

70

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 DHA-02 MCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 SY-05 IO-13

USSS-00 /072 W

----- 124639

O 211958Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1467

S E C R E T SANTIAGO 9212

EO 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PINR, PINS, PINT, CI

SUBJECT: ASSASSINATION OF ORLANDO LETELIER

REF: LUERS-POPPER TELCON, SEPTEMBER 21

1. I APPRECIATE PROMPT ADVICE TO US CONCERNING BOMBING OF EX-GOC FONMIN LETELIER AND HIS TWO COMPANIONS. DETAILS ARE FILTERING IN FROM WASHINGTON, INCLUDING SENATOR ABOUREZK'S STATEMENT ATTRIBUTING RESPONSIBILITY TO "CHILEAN TYRANNY". AS OF 1500 HOURS LOCAL, GOC HAS MAINTAINED PUBLIC SILENCE.

2. DEPARTMENT WILL BE BETTER ABLE THAN WE ARE TO ESTIMATE THE EXTENT OF THE ADVERSE EFFECT OF THIS OUTRAGE ON THE JUNTA'S POSITION IN THE UNITED STATES. WE ARE SURE THERE WILL BE A VERBAL OUTBURST, AND NOTE THAT THE ASSASSINATION COULD NOT HAVE BEEN BETTER TIMED TO ATTRACT THE ATTENTION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY NOW CONVENING IN NEW YORK. WE WOULD GUESS THAT THE GOC WOULD HASTEN TO DENY ALL RESPONSIBILITY. IT MAY WELL SUGGEST THE AFFAIR IS A LEFTIST PROVOCATION DESIGNED TO HURT THE GOC. THIS IS NOT INCONCEIVABLE, BUT IS UNLIKELY TO BE WIDELY ACCEPTED IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY CONFIRMING EVIDENCE.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 SANTIA 09212 212038Z

3. WE RECALL TWO PREVIOUS INSTANCES IN WHICH JUNTA OPPONENTS

WERE MYSTERIOUSLY ATTACKED: THE CASE OF GENERAL CARLOS PRATS, KILLED IN BUENOS AIRES IN SEPTEMBER 1974, AND THE CASE OF BERNARDO LEIGHTON, SERIOUSLY WOUNDED IN ROME IN OCTOBER 1975. IN BOTH CASES, TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, INVESTIGATION AS TO THE PERPETRATORS PROVED FRUITLESS. THE ATTACK ON GENERAL ALFREDO CANALES, THE JUNTA'S AMBASSADOR IN BEIRUT IN JULY 1974 HAS REMAINED EQUALLY MYSTERIOUS.

4. BASED ON OBVIOUS MOTIVATION, SUSPICION WILL FALL FIRST OF ALL ON THE GOC DIRECTORATE OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE (DINA). LETELIER WAS A FIRST-RANK POLITICAL FOE OF THE JUNTA. HE WAS POLITICALLY ACTIVE IN EXILE. SILENCING HIM WILL TEND TO INHIBIT SOME OTHER EXILES FROM SPEAKING, WRITING OR PLOTTING AGAINST THE JUNTA.

5. BUT WE HAVE NEVER HAD ANY INDICATION THAT DINA WAS IN ANY WAY OPERATIONAL IN U.S. TERRITORY, AND IT IS DIFFICULT FOR US TO BELIEVE THAT EVEN ITS RATHER FANATICAL LEADERS WOULD EXPOSE THEMSELVES TO THE CONSEQUENCES OF BEING IMPLICATED IN A TERRORIST ACT IN WASHINGTON. FURTHER, IF DINA HAD BEEN PLANNING TO KILL LETELIER AND IF PRESIDENT PINOCHET KNEW OF SUCH PLANS, IT SEEMS TO US UNLIKELY THAT THE CHILEANS WOULD HAVE PROMULGATED SO SHORTLY BEFORE THE CRIME THE DECREE DEPRIVING LETELIER OF HIS CHILEAN CITIZENSHIP.

6. ANOTHER POSSIBILITY IS THAT DINA OR OTHER GOC SOURCES COULD HAVE STIMULATED ACTION BY SOME RIGHTIST GROUP LOCATED OUTSIDE CHILE. WE HAVE IN MIND POSSIBLE COOPERATION BY SOUTHERN CONE GOVERNMENT SECURITY AUTHORITIES TO ELIMINATE ENEMIES ABROAD. WE HOPE OUR INTELLIGENCE EFFORTS IN OTHER CAPITALS WILL FOLLOW UP ON ANY INDICATIONS THAT SOUTHERN CONE GOVERNMENT INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES ARE ORGANIZING FOR TERRORISM OUTSIDE THE REGION.

7. HERE IN THE EMBASSY WE ARE CONFINING OURSELVES TO REFERRING ALL INQUIRIES TO USG SPOKESMEN IN WASHINGTON. WE WILL BEEF UP OUR LOCAL SECURITY PRECAUTIONS AGAINST THE POSSIBILITY THAT AN ACTION-REACTION SYNDROME COULD TEMPORARILY MAKE US A TARGET FOR CHILEAN RESPONSE TO EMOTIONAL STATEMENTS FROM THE U.S.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 SANTIA 09212 212038Z

POPPER

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ASSASSINATION, BOMBING, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, EXILES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976SANTIA09212
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X3
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760356-0965
From: SANTIAGO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760937/aaaabfgg.tel
Line Count: 108
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12 MAY 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <31 AUG 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ASSASSINATION OF ORLANDO LETELIER
TAGS: PINR, PINS, PINT, CI, US, (LETELIER, ORLANDO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006